



NEW MAINERS RESOURCE CENTER



MAINE NURSING LICENSING GUIDE

FOR INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED PROFESSIONALS

nmrcmaine.org



WHO WE ARE

The New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) is a state-wide program serving internationally trained professionals (ITPs). We offer resources to assist New Mainers in overcoming barriers to entering the US workforce. Our services include: career advising, licensing and credential support, job readiness skills, and networking with employers, colleges and universities.

NMRC is proud to be affiliated with the Welcome Back Initiative, a national program committed to building a bridge between foreign-trained health workers and the need for health services in underserved communities.

The Purpose of this Guide

One major challenge faced by skilled professionals, such as nurses, is the successful navigation of the complex re-licensing requirements in Maine. The purpose of this guide is to provide internationally trained nurses with the information they need to make informed decisions about their options to work in the healthcare field in Maine.

For additional information or assistance from the New Mainers Resource Center contact:



nmrcmaine.org
nmrc@portlandschools.org

DATA CURRENCY DISCLAIMER: Labor market, wage, and cost information presented in this guide is based on data collected in August 2025. Employment conditions, licensing requirements, wages, and associated costs may change over time and may vary by employer, region, or individual circumstances. This guide is intended as an informational resource and does not guarantee employment, wages, or licensing outcomes.

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PROCESS FOR INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED NURSES IN MAINE



1

APPLY FOR TRUMERIT EVALUATION

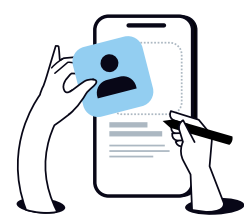
You will need your university to send official transcripts and diploma. You will need the nursing council in your home country to verify your license in that country.



2

TAKE THE TOEFL EXAM

You may be exempt from this exam if your nursing education was conducted in English.



3

APPLY FOR A LICENSE WITH THE MAINE BOARD OF NURSING

After you receive your TruMerit CES report, the Maine Board of Nursing will determine if you are eligible to take the NCLEX exam for licensing.



4

REGISTER FOR A BACKGROUND CHECK

You will make an appointment for fingerprinting, and the Board of Nursing will perform a background check.



5

TAKE THE NCLEX EXAM

The Board of Nursing will issue an Authorization to Test. You will register for the NCLEX exam.



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STEPS TO LICENSURE



After you pass this exam, you will become **licensed in Maine!**

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long does the licensing process take?

To become licensed as an internationally trained nurse in Maine, you will need to register for an evaluation of your credentials with TruMerit (formerly CGFNS) and then take a licensing exam. This process can take 1-2 years. Because each person is different, the amount of time needed to study and prepare for the exams can vary. (Please see the [Timeline](#) included in this guide for more details.)

2. What documents will I need?

You will need educational documents from your university in your home country and licensing documents from the governing body that grants licensure. Your university and the nursing council will need to send your transcripts, diplomas, and licensing documents to TruMerit directly.

3. What if I cannot access my original documents or my university is unresponsive?

If you are unable to have your documents sent from your school or nursing council, you may not be able to pursue nursing licensure through TruMerit. If you have your original transcripts and diplomas with you (or copies in some cases), you may have other options for pursuing a career in healthcare. Some internationally trained nurses decide to return to school for nursing or other healthcare careers. In this case, you may be able to use another evaluation company that does not require that your transcripts be sent from your school. If you are not pursuing licensure through TruMerit, it is important to use a [NACES](#) approved evaluation company. This evaluation will be appropriate for admission to colleges and universities, and you may be eligible for credit for some of the courses that you have already taken.



4. Will I need to take an English proficiency exam?

If your university education was conducted in English, you may not need to take a proficiency exam. If your university education was conducted in another language, you will likely need to take a proficiency exam. As part of your application for evaluation with TruMerit, you will be told if you need to take an exam based on the information you submit. If you are required to take a proficiency exam, the Maine Board of Nursing only accepts the TOEFL for licensing purposes.

If you do need to pass a proficiency exam, you should consider this in your timeline. TruMerit will not begin your evaluation until you have submitted passing scores. You should consider completing this step before beginning the evaluation with TruMerit. Please see [Steps to Licensure](#) for more information.

5. What happens after TruMerit issues their evaluation report?

Once TruMerit completes the evaluation and issues their report, you will need to apply to the Maine Board of Nursing. The Maine Board of Nursing will then evaluate your TruMerit report and make a decision on licensing. The Board may issue equivalency for Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, or they may find gaps in your credentials and require additional coursework. If there are gaps, you may be able to take courses as a nonmatriculated student at a university. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis by each university. Once you complete the course(s), you will send the transcripts to the Board to complete the evaluation process. When the Board of Nursing finds that your nursing education is complete, you will receive permission to take the licensing exam.

6. What is the licensing exam for nursing, and how do I register?

The licensing exam for nursing (both LPN level and RN level) is called NCLEX. You must receive Authorization to Test (ATT) from the Maine Board of Nursing before you can register for this exam. When you receive your ATT you will also receive information on how to register for the exam. However, you can start taking practice tests early to see how much additional preparation you will need. You will most likely want to enroll in an NCLEX preparation course online or in person.

7. Are there other jobs in healthcare I can consider while I'm going through the evaluation process?

Some positions in healthcare only require a short training, while others require more extensive courses. See the [Other Jobs in Healthcare](#) section for more information. Consider taking a job that has on-site training or partners with a training institution. Often, these institutions (hospitals, nursing homes etc.) will allow you to work while supporting your certification with time and finances.

Overview of the Profession



Nursing in Maine is regulated by the Maine state Board of Nursing. There are multiple levels of nursing: Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Registered Nurse (RN), and advanced practice nurse (APN) which include specialties like Certified Nurse Practitioner or Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. The Board of Nursing will consider internationally trained nurses for licenses at the LPN or RN level. The Board of Nursing will not consider internationally trained nurses for licensing in any of the APN specialties.

Both LPNs and RNs must pass the licensing exam, called the NCLEX, although there are different exams for each level. LPNs typically complete 1-2 years of post-secondary study, roughly 35 credit hours. RNs must complete about two years of post-secondary study, roughly 69 credit hours. In some states, nurses must complete a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN) to be employed as an RN. As of this writing in September 2025, Maine does not have this requirement. Nurses with either an Associate's Degree in Nursing (ADN) or a BSN may be licensed as an RN in Maine.

Nationally, the demand for nurses is increasing. For RNs, employment is projected to grow 5% from 2024-2034, according to the [US Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#). This number is faster than the average for all occupations. The BLS predicts that there will be approximately 189,000 annual openings for RNs by 2034. Employment opportunities for LPNs are also predicted to grow, 3% by 2034, with approximately 54,400 nationwide openings each year, according to [BLS](#). This information is up to date as of September 2025; please check the [US Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) for the most current information.

Eligibility & Timeline for Licensure

To be eligible for licensure as a nurse in Maine, you must have completed a post-secondary nursing education program (such as at a university) and have held a nursing license in your home country. You will need to have your education verified through [TruMerit](#) (formerly CGFNS) and pass a licensing exam, called NCLEX. You may also be required to pass the TOEFL exam to demonstrate English proficiency.

Once you begin the application process with TruMerit, you will have 12 months to make sure your official documents are sent from your home country. After TruMerit has all of the necessary documents, it typically takes 10 weeks to evaluate your credentials and issue the Credentials Evaluation Service (CES) Report.

After you receive your CES report, you can apply with the Maine Board of Nursing for your nursing license. The board will then review your CES report to determine eligibility to take the NCLEX. This step typically goes relatively quickly, around 10 days. If you are eligible to take the NCLEX, the board will grant you Authorization To Test (ATT) and you will have 90 days to register to schedule the exam through Person Vue. You must also undergo a criminal background check (fingerprinting). The results of the background check are valid for 90 days, so it is recommended to complete this screening closer to your exam date. If you have any coursework to complete, you will not be eligible to take the exam until all of the requirements are completed.

Key Details



If your education was in a language other than English, you will need to pass the TOEFL before TruMerit will begin your application review. Because TruMerit can't begin your evaluation until they receive your TOEFL results, it is recommended that you take the TOEFL before you begin the application process.



You will have 12 months from submitting your initial application to get your documents to TRUMERIT, or you will need to pay more to extend your application.



The Board of Nursing recommends completing the criminal background check close to the end of the process. It must be completed within 90 days of your test date.



Keep in mind that you will need to have a Social Security Number to be licensed as a nurse. You may begin the evaluation process before receiving your SSN, but you cannot complete the licensure application through the Board of Nursing without your SSN.

Steps to Licensure

1 CREDENTIAL EVALUATION

The Board of Nursing in Maine requires that you have your education and license evaluated by TruMerit (formerly CGFNS). You will have 12 months to supply the required documents and scores to TruMerit once you start the process. You will be required to submit the following documentation:

- Recent English test scores on the TOEFL unless you are exempt
- Recent photograph, similar to a passport photo
- Documentation of completion from your secondary school program
- Official transcripts from your nursing program
- Verification of licensure from the office or program that issued your license or diploma



Costs:

- TOEFL registration: **\$270**
 - You should request your scores be sent to TruMerit before you take the test. Additional score reports will cost **\$29** if you do not select TruMerit in advance.
 - There is an additional **\$125** fee paid to TruMerit if you are required to demonstrate English proficiency.
- Credential Evaluation Service (CES) Report from TruMerit: **\$485**
 - If your application expires and you need to extend your application: **\$225**.
- If your documents are not in English, there will be additional charges for translation.
- Your schools or licensing office may also charge you fees.
- You may need to pay someone in your country to help access official documents.
- Additional charges may apply for extensions, reissuing reports, missing documents, added translation services, etc.

How to Begin the Process

- On the [TruMerit](#) website, select the Credential Evaluation Service (CES Professional Report) and start the application. Once you begin the online application, the forms mentioned below will become available to you.
- As soon as possible, prepare and send the Request for Academic Records Transcripts form* to any nursing or nursing-related post-secondary schools that you attended. You can access this form through your online application. You must sign it and then you can send it by mail, as a scanned email attachment, or in person.
- Send a photocopy of your secondary school (high school equivalent) certificate/diploma or results of external exams. This does not need to be official.
- Prepare and send the Request for Validation of License Registration/ Diploma form* to the office or program that issued your license, asking them to send the completed form and any attachments to TruMerit.
- Once you pass your TOEFL exam, they will send official scores to TruMerit.
- Sign and send the CES Verification forms to your nursing school(s) and former licensing agency. They can be mailed, emailed, or delivered in person. These forms will need to be returned to TruMerit by mail directly from the nursing program and licensing office.
- Once all official documents have been sent to TruMerit, it can take up to 10 weeks for an assessment to be completed (you can expedite for additional fee).

*The transcript and license will need to be officially translated if they are not in English. TruMerit can translate documents for an additional fee.

2 ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST

TruMerit will determine if you need to take an English proficiency exam based on your education. Generally, if your nursing education was conducted in a language other than English, you will be required to demonstrate English proficiency. The Maine Board of Nursing requires the **TOEFL iBT** exam for this purpose.

- You will need an overall minimum score of 84 and a minimum speaking score of 26 on the TOEFL.
- Consider the time it will take to prepare and pass the English test.
- You can begin preparing for the TOEFL before you begin the TruMerit application.
- You must have the demonstrated scores in order for TruMerit to begin the evaluation.



Key Details



TOEFL tests are timed, 2-hour tests with 4 parts: speaking, listening, reading and writing.



Registration in Maine is **\$270**, as of this writing. Please refer to the **TOEFL website** for updated registration costs.



Register **AT LEAST** a week in advance of when you want to take your test, or else you will be charged a late fee. Scores are processed in about 10 days.



TruMerit **does not** accept the at-home versions of English Language Proficiency exams.



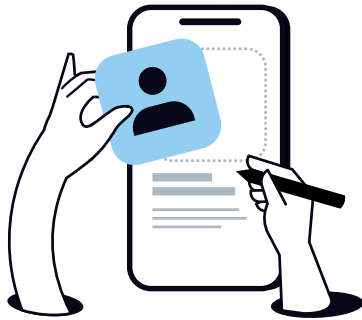
You will send the scores to TruMerit, you do not need to also send them to the Board of Nursing.






If you have achieved the necessary score within the past two years, you do not need to re-take the test. You can have your previous scores sent to TruMerit.

3 APPLYING WITH THE MAINE BOARD OF NURSING

The Maine Board of Nursing recommends that you obtain your CES Report from TruMerit before applying for licensure. The Board of Nursing will not consider your application until the CES report is received. You will need a SSN to complete your application.



Key Details



-  The initial review from the Board of Nursing will take about 10 days.
-  The application fee is **\$75**.
-  Your license will not be granted until after successfully passing the licensing exam (NCLEX).

4 BACKGROUND CHECK

Before you take the NCLEX exam, you will need to complete a Criminal Background Check (CBC). This CBC is conducted via fingerprints. You will need to make an appointment with [IdentoGO](#) to have your fingerprints taken. IdentoGO will send the results of your CBC directly to the Board of Nursing, you will not receive confirmation of this step.



Key Details

-  The fee for the criminal background check (fingerprinting) is **\$52**.
-  The CBC must be done within 90 days of your test date, so it is best to wait until your test is scheduled and choose a fingerprint appointment within the 90-day time frame.

5 TAKING THE NCLEX

Taking your nursing exam (NCLEX) is the last step of the licensure process. The Board of Nursing will review your evaluations and grant you Authorization To Test (ATT) if you have fulfilled all of the educational requirements. If they identify gaps in your courses or credentials, you may be required to take additional coursework before they can grant ATT. The board will notify the testing agency if and when you are authorized to schedule your test.



Key Details



Once you have received your ATT, you will have 90 days to schedule your NCLEX exam.



Registration for the exam is through [Pearson Vue](#); the registration fee is **\$200**.



Results of the exam are generally available online in about 24 hours.



Your Board of Nursing license status is updated automatically, usually within 24 hours of the Board receiving the results.



Other Jobs in Healthcare

While you are pursuing licensing, you may wish to consider other jobs. Some will require short term training and may not have a lot of potential for career advancement. Other jobs, which require longer training periods, are ones that you might consider as a permanent career if licensure in your chosen field isn't a pathway you want to pursue.



CNA

Certified Nursing Assistant

- **Requirements:** 8-10 weeks of training (180 hours), successfully pass certification exam
- **Scope:** Work in hospitals or skilled nursing facilities; provide direct patient care for activities of daily living and basic health care needs
- **Training:** May be offered by adult education programs or “earn while you learn” programs at some hospitals



PSS

Personal Support Specialist

- **Requirements:** 50 hours of training; successfully pass certification exam
- **Scope:** Work in skilled nursing facilities or home health care environments; provide assistance with daily living for older adults or individuals with disabilities
- **Training:** Often provided through on the job training programs by employers





DSP

Direct Support Professional

- **Requirements:** 50 hours of training; successfully pass certification exam
- **Scope:** Work in home care environments or in group settings. Help individuals with disabilities by providing assistance with daily living
- **Training:** Often provided through on the job training programs by employers



MA

Medical Assistant

- **Requirements:** 9-month training; successfully pass certification exam
- **Scope:** Perform clinical and administrative tasks to support healthcare providers; work in physicians' offices, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities
- **Training:** May be offered by adult education programs, community colleges, or by hospitals and healthcare facilities as an apprenticeship or "earn while you learn" program



PBT

Phlebotomist

- **Requirements:** 6–8 weeks of training; successfully pass certification exam
- **Scope:** Draw blood samples in hospital or lab setting
- **Training:** May be offered by community college programs or "earn while you learn" programs at hospitals



CPhT

Pharmacy Technician

- **Requirements:** 16-week training; successfully pass certification exam
- **Scope:** Assist licensed pharmacist in preparing and dispensing medication; may work in a hospital or retail pharmacy
- **Training:** May be offered by community college programs or "earn while you learn" programs in some pharmacy settings



121 York Street
Bangor, ME 04401

(207) 941-6316
bangoradulthood.org



145 Birch Street
Lewiston, ME 04240

(207) 784-2928
lewiston.maineadulted.org



14 Locust Street
Portland, ME 04103

(207) 842-4602
portlandadulted.org